



# Free Interpreting Service for private medical practitioners

The Free Interpreting Service aims to provide equitable access to key services for people with limited or no English language proficiency.

Private medical practitioners can access the Free Interpreting Service to provide Medicare rebateable services to anyone in Australia who has a Medicare card.

## Why medical practitioners use interpreters

Australia has a rich cultural diversity. The 2016 census revealed that Australians were born in almost 200 different countries and speak more than 300 languages.

Medical practitioners use credentialed interpreters to communicate complex or technical information to patients with limited or no English language proficiency. This can help to ensure accuracy of communication, reduce confusion, save time, and protect practitioners from professional risk. It is particularly important when:

- seeking informed consent
- dealing with patients in a crisis
- dealing with complexity
- assessing patient competence.

## Services available to private medical practitioners

Private medical practitioners can use the Free Interpreting Service to access interpreting services delivered by TIS National, including:

- immediate phone interpreting
- pre-booked phone interpreting
- pre-booked onsite interpreting.

Immediate phone interpreting is most useful for unplanned interactions. It provides:

- access to over 3000 interpreters in over 160 different languages
- interpreting services 24 hours a day 7 days a week
- connection to an interpreter within a few minutes of calling.

Pre-booked phone interpreting is useful for planned medical appointments, or if you need to request a less common language.

When phone interpreting is not suitable, TIS National can arrange an interpreter to arrive onsite for a face-to-face appointment. This may be important when the consultation is particularly complicated, for example, where a doctor needs to give complex or technical instructions or rely heavily on non-verbal cues.

You may also wish to use onsite interpreting if you have several patients who need the same language interpreter and are able to schedule these so that one interpreter can attend for several appointments.





## Eligibility

Under the Free Interpreting Service, private medical practitioners are defined as general practitioners, nurse practitioners and approved medical specialists.

Private medical practitioners are eligible to access the Free Interpreting Service when delivering services that are:

- Medicare-rebateable
- delivered in private practice
- provided to anyone in Australia who has a Medicare card.

Practice support staff working with a private medical practitioner registered with TIS National can also access the service using the same client code.

The Free Interpreting Service can be used for delivering health services, including but not limited to:

- arranging appointment times
- undertaking health consultations
- developing health plans
- providing medical test results.

The Free Interpreting Service cannot be used for:

- allied health services
- patients who do not hold a Medicare card
- state funded public health services, such as services provided in hospitals.

## Register for a client code

Each practitioner will need a unique client code to access the service.

To register for a client code, complete the online client registration form on the [TIS National website](#). If you require assistance with registering contact TIS National on 1300 575 847.

## How to access the Free Interpreting Service

1. Call TIS National on 1300 131 450.
2. Provide the operator with the language of the interpreter that you need.
3. Provide your client code and the name of the medical practitioner
4. Request an interpreter of a particular gender, if required (subject to availability).

## More information

- Read: about the Free Interpreting Service [tisnational.gov.au/FIS](https://tisnational.gov.au/FIS)
- Watch: videos about TIS National services and how to work with interpreters [tisnational.gov.au/videos](https://tisnational.gov.au/videos)
- Order: free promotional materials from the online TIS National catalogue [tisnational.gov.au/promomaterials](https://tisnational.gov.au/promomaterials)
- Contact: TIS National on 1300 575 847 or [tis.freeinterpreting@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:tis.freeinterpreting@homeaffairs.gov.au)

## Medical Practitioner Priority Line

**1300 131 450**

**24 hours a day, every day of the year**



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